

**DEED / VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES**  
**VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 26, 2013 – 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM**

**WOODBURY VRS OFFICE / HUDSON CONFERENCE ROOM**

**SESSION NOTES:**

**Committee Objective**

The purpose of the VRS Community Rehabilitation Program Advisory Committee is to provide strategic advice and consultation to DEED/VRS on topics and issues affecting the mutual provision of DEED/VRS and CRP/LUV services to Minnesotans with disabilities. Our efforts to understand issues and to work collaboratively will build and nurture the capacity of Minnesota's rehabilitation community to advance the employment, independent living and community integration of Minnesotans with disabilities.

Specifically, the VRS Community Rehabilitation Program Advisory Committee will:

- Represent the perspectives and interests of CRP/LUVs in advancing rehabilitation and employment issues while fostering dialogue and engagement on critical issues throughout the greater rehabilitation community
- Provide strategic level advice and consultation to DEED/VRS on matters affecting CRP/LUVs
- Identify key topics and issues affecting CRP/LUVs and DEED/VRS
- Consider input from subject matter experts in issues affecting economic development, state demographics / population trends, and promising practices
- Engage in active reflection, spirited discussion and strategic dialogue on critical topics affecting CRP/LUVs and DEED/VRS services to persons with disabilities in Minnesota
- Provide a forum for the review and discussion of critical VRS and CRP service delivery topics including, but not limited to: current service delivery practices; new and emerging service needs; identifying best practices; and the consideration of statewide service needs and resources
- Promote innovative service practices to accelerate the adoption of best practices at a systems level that fosters equitable access to quality services on a statewide basis

**2013 Community Partner Members** (listed alphabetically): Becky Bazzarre, Laura Bealey, Gil Bessard, Steve Brink, Heather Deutschlaender, Mike Harper, Dan Meyers, Julie Peterschick, Rachel Praught, Lori Sterner, Sara Sundeen, and Leslie Swartling

**VRS Members:** Becky Johnson, Peg Killen, Chris McVey, Roland Root, Dee Torgerson, and Jeri Werner

**Sponsor:** Kim Peck, VRS Director

**Co-leaders:** Chris McVey, David Sherwood-Gabrielson and Jan Thompson

**Facilitator:** Holly Johnson

**2013 Schedule:** Jan 25, Feb 22, Apr 26, Jun 28, Sep 27, Oct 25, and Dec 6.

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**April 26, 2013 Session Objectives:**

- \* Provide a conduit for sharing relevant, important and timely updates and information for the benefit of vocational rehabilitation community and consumers
- \* Provide an introductory overview of Olmstead Decision and discuss implications for the Rehabilitation Community.
- \* Revisit the March 2012 strategic dialogue regarding the community partners meeting framework in the context of the new and emerging VRS regional structure

**April 2013 Attendees** (*listed alphabetically*): Becky Bazzarre, Laura Bealey, Gil Bessard, Steve Brink, Heather Deutschlaender, Mike Harper, Becky Johnson, Peg Killen, Dan Meyers, Chris McVey, Kim Peck, Julie Peterschick, Rachel Praught, Roland Root, David Sherwood-Gabrielson, Sara Sundeen, Leslie Swartling, Jan Thompson, Dee Torgerson, and Jeri Werner

**Not in attendance:** all members present

**Facilitator:** Holly Johnson

**Agenda Topics:**

1. Welcome / Overview
2. Remembering Lori Sterner
3. Vocational Rehabilitation Community Topics
4. Strategic Dialogue: Review and Discussion of the 'Olmstead Decision' Implications for the Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Community
5. Strategic Dialogue: Revisiting Community Partners Meetings with the Regional Structure
6. Wrap Up/Adjourn

**Meeting Highlights:**

- The remaining three signatures were secured to officially activate the 2013 VRS CRP Advisory Committee charter
- The committee discussed issues and responses related to the Supreme Court's Olmstead Decision and its implications for Minnesota's rehabilitation community
- The committee provided ideas for refinements to the mix of local, regional and statewide meetings to continue building productive connections and relationships for greater results

**Next Steps:**

- **DOCUMENT SESSION NOTES:** Documentation and communication of session notes for key audiences including committee, VRS organization and CRP partners.
- **DISCOVERY IN MINNESOTA:** David Sherwood-Gabrielson will share the draft charter for the DISCOVERY Process work team with the committee at the June meeting to provide an update and gather strategic guidance.
- **OLMSTEAD DECISION:** Committee members will provide Kim Peck any inputs regarding their ideas in response to the State of Minnesota Executive Order 13-01 from Governor Dayton's office charging the state to develop an Olmstead Plan.
- **JUNE VR COMMUNITY SUCCESS STORY** - Dan Meyers will provide June's story.
- **NEXT MEETING:** Next meeting is Friday, June 28<sup>th</sup>.

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## **Welcome and Overview**

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Committee member Becky Bazzarre provided the opening community partnership success story which included two clients stories:

1. *The book 'Until the Sunsets - The Poems of the Schizophrenic Mind' was just published by client Benjamin William Phillips. The book has a special dedication to the author's family as well as two Lifetrack Resources staff who worked closely with Benjamin.*
2. *"Story of Gary": Gary was in day treatment when he was referred and started in IPS. Working in partnership - Lifetrack Resources, Canvas Health and the Woodbury VRS Office - combined disciplines and shared resources to help Gary. Keys to success included learning the language of mental health providers and helping to change the mindset toward employment as well as the benefits discovered and amplified as a result of physical co-location of team members assisting the consumer.*

## **Vocational Rehabilitation Community Topics**

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Updates included the following:

- ❖ **Reauthorization of WIA** - Congress is currently debating a variety of ways to address the areas addressed within the Workforce Investment Act. 'The Skills Act' legislation proposed in the House is problematic for VRS for a number of reasons. There are also a few draft bills being generated from the Senate and their fate is unknown.

Overall, there is an emphasis on services to Transition age youth. The Skills Act is quite prescriptive in its terms of services for Transition youth. RSA will be addressing the 'areas of gray' that can sometimes create fuzzy boundaries between "outreach" and actual "services" to Transition Youth.

- ❖ **Federal sequestration of funds:** The anticipated 5.1% reduction was mitigated by an approved 3% COLA. VRS has made the decision to draw on contingency monies to cover FY2013. Without sequestration funding resolution, current forecast FY2014 will require closing of service categories starting with Category 3. VRS will continue to provide updates on funding impacts as more details emerge and are approved for communication.
- ❖ **Legislative process:** Minnesota's Centers for Independent Living, NAMI, and MOHR (formerly MACRO) are among those organizations who are advocating for resources for the public rehabilitation system. There were no VRS initiatives included the Governor's proposed Biennial Budget. The Senate passed their Omnibus bill this week and next week will begin conference committees to work out differences and develop one bill for the legislative bodies and ultimately to the Governor's desk for signatures. At this point there are additional monies for mental health employment services included in the bill in the amount of \$500,000 each year for the biennium - these monies are targeted for IPS model of services. The Minnesota's Independent Living Centers had requested a modest increase however Centers appear to be flat funded in both houses and it seems unlikely CILs will get an increase. Kim Peck voiced her appreciation to partners for their advocacy to support the rehabilitation program. As a state agency, DEED VRS has a clearly defined role and cannot promote additional funding unless new resources are included in the Governor's Biennial Budget.

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❖ **DEED/VRS updates:**

- After 38 years of service, VRS Director of Administrative Services Connie Giles, has resigned from her state position and has accepted a program manager position with Lifeworks in Mankato closer to where she lives. Kim Peck will be working to fill this important vacancy on the VRS administration staff.
- DISCOVERY update - David Sherwood-Gabrielson is working with a small project team to develop a way to move the DISCOVERY Process into the cadre of programs offered in Minnesota's public rehabilitation program. The June 28<sup>th</sup> meeting will include review of a draft charter for the service. VRS Specialist Abbie Wells-Herzog will be traveling to the Duluth area to work with a new Limited Use Vendor (LUV) organization (UDAC) that is planning to offer DISCOVERY. Abbie has a key role in reviewing requests from partner organizations that want to add DISCOVERY to their contracts with VRS.
- Alyssa Klein, VRS Specialist, held a statewide meeting with counselors focused on developing strategic priorities for serving Transition Youth. Field Director Jan Thompson is working with Alyssa on this initiative. Transition Youth continues to gather greater attention from all levels of government - local, state and federal.
- VRS has also begun more intentional work on leadership development to address important questions such as: what does it mean to be a leader within our agency and within our community? how do we create opportunities and foster growth? The VRS Leadership Team has conducted preliminary work to identify leadership competencies.
- There is a greater emphasis and continued training in both Motivational Interviewing (MI) and counseling; especially as it relates to working with consumers with resistance or self-defeating behaviors. VRS Staff Development Director JoLynn Blaeser is working to bring training to the field. The Counseling Supervision pilot was very successful. All RAMS who were not part of the pilot group who received the innovative coaching and training will receive it in August.
- Local placement partnerships are thriving. While each group is organic with unique features, there is a unifying commitment to work in partnership by participating entities including VRS, CRPs, and LUVs.
- Next Generation Placement update: VRS Strategic Initiatives Director Chris McVey announced that three pilot areas have been identified, one in each region, for the Next Generation Placement pilots. The Northern Region pilot will be conducted in the Morehead, Thief River Falls, Crookston and Roseau area. The Metro Region pilot will be hosted by North and South Minneapolis offices. The South Central Region will be conducted in Faribault and Albert Lea area. Chris met with VRS staff in the South Central Region pilot last week and plans to meet with all pilot VRS sites involved by end of May. Next she plans to bring the full pilot participants in each region together sometime in early summer. The pilots will focus on the transformational process changes rooted in a true team approach. During the pilot phase, PBA financial milestones and payments will remain the same. Communication regarding the Next Generation Placement pilots will be rolled out to the greater rehabilitation community next week.

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❖ **CRP updates:**

- **Steve Brink** - Tran\$Em
  - VRS and partners in the northeastern area held a new collaborative meeting two weeks ago and greatly benefitted from guests from the Minneapolis Placement Partnership (MPP): Robert Reedy of Rise and Thant Pearson of VRS North Minneapolis. Steve said they are using MPP as a foundation to create their own collaborative in the Northern Region. Providers are excited to get things going and the new collaborative is planning on meeting monthly. They have invited Clay County partners into the effort and people are starting to see real partnership benefits.
- **Dan Meyers** - Opportunity Partners
  - Alice Johnson is now in place as the CFO at Opportunity Partners (OP). Alice replaces Bruce Bester who retired after many years of service. OP is celebrating 60 years as an organization. Dan also provided a Walgreens REDI program update. A new person has been hired to lead the REDI program efforts. Leadership at Walgreens is in transition for support of the program due to retirements, etc. Dan reiterated his offer to support any organization interested in pursuing REDI participation. Finally, he shared that OP has begun an exciting new partnership with Dunwoody.
- **Mike Harper** - RISE, Inc.
  - RISE Inc. received an EE grant to support reentry services for people returning into communities from prison.
  - Tim Dickey has replaced Don Lavin as Vice President of Rise. Don retired after many years of service to the organization.
  - Rise, Inc. will be gathering information via a survey on the wages for placement staff as well as the job expectations for staff working in placement. Survey will include the number of placement staff, model of service delivery and funding sources, etc. Mike is working with his Rise colleagues, Joan Distler and Robert Reedy. CRPs and LUVs interested in participating in the survey are invited to share their data and receive survey results. For more information contact Mike.
- **Heather Deutschlander** - ProAct
  - ProAct has hired a full time staff person focused on DISCOVERY process services. They have also added another placement professional to their staff. The organization will be restructuring and expanding this summer.
- **Sarah Sundeen** - Minnesota Career Solutions
  - Sarah provided the updated date of June 1<sup>st</sup> for the official integration of Sister Kenny and Courage Center.
- **Becky Bazzarre** - Lifetrack Resources
  - Lifetrack Resources has set a goal of 100 placements for the 2013 calendar year and is already at 53! Becky attributes the great progress to the partnership team motivation and energy.

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- **Rachel Praught** - Functional Industries
  - The St Cloud local partnership is going well; however Monticello/Buffalo partnership is having a slower start. Committee members offered support. Steve Brink reiterated the value to their new collaborative of inviting guests from active partnerships to help new ones get off on the right foot.
  - Rachel shared that Functional Industries is looking for DISCOVERY training to prepare to successfully deliver an EE grant supporting Autism.
- **Laura Bealey** - MRCI-Mankato
  - MRCI is also celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> year anniversary. Jan Thompson & Dee Torgerson recently visited MRCI.
  - MRCI is breaking ground on a new 35,000 sq ft DTH building that will have capacity for 120 people. The new center is scheduled to open February 2014.
  - MRCI has hired two new business development managers - one in metro and one in Mankato. They are actively working to address the Olmstead Decision and working on goals for getting more people into competitive employment in the community.
  - On the local partnership front, Laura shared that the South of the River collaborative is going well however Mankato is still working on ramping up and trying to bring in more resources to address greater needs.
  - MRCI has begun a new transition youth program and school counselors are excited about using the new 'Bridge to the Future' training.
- **Leslie Swartling** - WORC
  - WORC has been focused on the legislative process and advocating for people with disabilities.
  - WORC is on track to open their new commercial laundry this summer.
- **Gil Bessard** - Tasks Unlimited
  - Tasks Unlimited is also increasingly active in the legislative process.
- **Jeri Werner** - VRS Duluth Office
  - Jeri announced a May 23<sup>rd</sup> Deaf Hard of Hearing (DHH) training in Duluth and invited those interested in attending to contact her.

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**Strategic Dialogue: Review and Discussion of the 'Olmstead Decision'  
Implications for the Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Community**

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**Background:**

*"On June 22, 1999, the United States Supreme Court held in Olmstead v. L.C. that unjustified segregation of persons with disabilities constitutes discrimination in violation of title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Court held that public entities must provide community-based services to persons with disabilities when (1) such services are appropriate; (2) the affected persons do not oppose community-based treatment; and (3) community-based services can be reasonably accommodated, taking into account the resources available to the public entity and the needs of others who are receiving disability services from the entity." Source: [http://www.ada.gov/olmstead/olmstead\\_about.htm](http://www.ada.gov/olmstead/olmstead_about.htm)*

The Supreme Court's Olmstead Decision has recently been highlighted given a lawsuit against the state of Oregon. Oregon VR is named in a lawsuit alleging it did not fully meet its responsibilities to create more opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities. Oregon has been a strong leader in a number of vocational rehabilitation areas.

In Minnesota, Judge Donovan Frank has expressed concerns on Minnesota's rate of progress and asserted rights to directly confer with the Department of Justice.

On January 28, 2013, Governor Mark Dayton issued an Executive Order establishing an Olmstead Sub-Cabinet to develop and implement a comprehensive Minnesota Olmstead Plan. The Sub-Cabinet usually meets on the second Tuesday of every month from 3:00pm – 5:00pm in the Elmer Andersen Building in St. Paul. The purpose of the sub-cabinet is to develop a statewide plan to more fully address the issues raised by the Olmstead Decision ruling. Employment related services is only one component within the Olmstead Decision's focus on community integration.

For more information on this committee:

[http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET\\_DYNAMIC\\_CONVERSION&RevisionS electionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=opc\\_home](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionS electionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=opc_home)

To assist the committee's understanding, Kim Peck distributed a copy of the State of Minnesota Executive Order 13-01 from Governor Mark Dayton's office charging the state with coming up with an Olmstead Plan. She also distributed the State of Oregon Office of the Governor Executive Order 13-04.

Kim stated that Minnesota VRS remains committed to the belief that there are very few consumers who cannot benefit from services. The federal Rehabilitation Act is premised on the understanding that individuals with the most significant disabilities can benefit from VR services when provided with appropriate supports. Past experience indicates that individuals with the most significant intellectual and development disabilities may require more cost intensive services. There are also costs for due diligence efforts in assessment services that must be provided before a consumer may be deemed unable to benefit from services. In addition, Minnesota VRS's commitment to Informed Choice means that counselors work to develop the full gamut of options for each consumer wherever possible.

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During the ARRA investment funding period, VRS targeted some “stimulus dollars” to conversion grants for CRPs to encourage efforts to transition more consumers from non-integrated center-based employment settings to integrated community employment opportunities. (Two EE providers, Functional Industries and Midwest Special Services received conversion grants). Grantees reported it was significantly easier to assist new consumers in exploring community employment than it was to assist consumers already working center-based work settings (and their families) in considering moving into community employment. Another commonly voiced experience was that the degree of resistance to moving from a workshop environment into community based employment tends to increase with the number of years a consumer is in a non-integrated setting. Nonetheless, the ARRA grant funding was helpful in assisting a number of consumers make a transition to community employment.

Minnesota VRS is also stepping up the training on Supported Employment for staff and partners. Roland Root, Northern Regional Manager shared the experience of a recent training hosted by VRS in their region that included invitations to county social services staff. The training was well attended and feedback comments were quite positive. Additional Supported Employment training offerings are planned as resources can be secured and scheduled.

The advisory committee discussed the current system complexity including the combination of variables connected with the social services path that tends to move consumers with the most significant intellectual and developmental disabilities towards waivers in many states including Minnesota. Kim Peck shared her concerns about this situation and has already initiated conversations on the topic with colleague Colleen Wieck, Executive Director, Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities. Kim also reviewed the impact to sheltered workshops funding in the State of Oregon’s Executive Order 13-04.

DEED was selected as a part of the sub-cabinet and a first draft of the comprehensive Minnesota Olmstead plan and strategies will be ready for public review June 11<sup>th</sup>. Summer 2013 is targeted for public input into the draft plan with the goal of an approved plan in place by November. It is widely anticipated that cross agency strategies will be needed to address the broad range of services.

#### **Advisory Dialogue and Inputs to Minnesota's Olmstead Decision Planning**

Kim invited committee members to help enlist input into Minnesota's planning and response to the Olmstead Decision. She asked the committee to assist with strategy development on how best strengthen efforts to build community based employment strategies that will move Minnesota away from non-integrated service options into a fuller range of community options for Minnesotans with the most significant disabilities.

Kim then opened up the dialogue to the advisory committee asking the following questions:

1. What are your ideas? What is your advice?
2. What are the potential impacts to the partners?
3. What if the consumer's choice is to continue/enter non-integrated workshop programs rather than community based employment?



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**Challenges discussed included:**

- **Transportation...** accessibility, availability, and affordability of transportation is a major statewide issue – working and participation in the community necessitates dependable transportation options.
- **Hours...** what services will be needed to fill the remaining hours if an individual goes from working a full day schedule in a workshop setting to working fewer hours in community employment?
- **Resistance and barriers in shifting current workshop participants into community based employment...** in general – finding new placements is the 'easy' part; the more difficult challenge is working with people currently in a workshop setting who may have greater service and funding needs, and who may wish to continue working in a non-integrated setting.
- **Every county has a different approach to transition...** school and county programs vary widely around the state in the expectations they have for transition age youth
- **County variation...** at least one county is asking for more sheltered workshop services. There are also situations in counties where there may be a limited number of employers and if a consumer has burned a few bridges they may have very limited to no viable remaining community options available to them.
- **Situations where parents/families are comfortable with segregated options...** some parents/families prefer the safety and convenience of facility-based programs because predictability and/or flexibility of work hours to adjust to other family plans and schedules. Within individual communities consumers, family members, guardians, and counties may resist efforts to change workshop based options to community options.
- **Barrier of perception of value of those in enclaves when receiving below minimum wage...** employers asking the question of 'are they competitive' when consumers have been making less than competitive wages. PBA assumes that people are able to be competitively employed.
- **Language issues and terminology...** the different terms, acronyms and language used to describe programs between VRS, partner programs and the counties may limit access to available resources -- we may sometimes miss out on what's possible due to problems in understanding the programs and funding that may be available.
- **Issues with current financial model...** built-in funding incentives (e.g. per diem rates and what's included in these rates) may make offering facility-based programs more attractive from a financial perspective than using resources in alternative ways to fund transportation and support services for individuals working in community settings. There is a need to examine the financial incentives that support the continuation of non-integrated employment options.
- **Consumer incentives to work more hours and achieve better wages...** for consumers living in many residential settings, there are minimal incentives to work more hours or to strive for better wages. Expanding worker incentives to include greater financial gain from working and allow contribution to the costs of care should be considered.
- **Impact of residential services...** The expectations of residential service providers can also limit the consideration of community options due to the impact of non-traditional (evening or weekend) work hours on the schedules of residential services staff.

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**Opportunities discussed included:**

- **Adopt an 'Employment First' approach...** start with an expectation of employment; bring school counselors into the approach early on; raise the awareness of staff/families/students of all the options.
- **Education of access to CADI and other waiver dollars/county resources...** educate consumers and their families on the waiver dollars that can be used to support community employment.
- **Influencing the employment / work focus of the IEP earlier, say at a 9<sup>th</sup> grade level...** working to support employment planning earlier in the educational career of students with disabilities and help create eventual expectations of transitioning into employment.
- **Reducing or eliminating the use in-house assessments...** Facility-based assessments / evaluations are still used and we should review the practice of using non-integrated settings for assessment and planning purposes.
- **Leverage an IPS (Individualized Placement and Supports) approach/best practices** of bringing together in a team including school, family, county, VR, etc. to develop a plan for people to move forward and out
- **Create/reinforce the mindset of "everyone works"...** it was acknowledged that people 'live up or down to our expectations', and it is uniquely challenging for many individuals with a significant disability to experience the expectation that work is a real possibility.
- **Other ideas...** one CRP is using an agency wide approach to help shift from the 'safe/retire in this job mindset to positive expectations for participating in community employment ... another CRP is using a multi-year approach to manage the significant changes that must occur in converting in-house employment -- setting alternative expectations about safety and fallback protections – and giving priority identifying with partners the consumers most likely to be successful in the community, and then building on this success ... one CRP has hosted 'tours' of local employers for consumers – getting consumers onsite at an employer seems to work better asking people to consider trying something without first having an experience of an employer or job setting.
- **Open door...** Kim wrapped up the input session by reminding the committee of her 'open door' inviting and welcoming ongoing participation in this Olmstead discussion by advisory committee members.

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## **Strategic Dialogue: Revisiting Community Partners Meetings within the VRS Regional Structure**

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David Sherwood-Gabrielson began this section of the meeting with a brief overview of the March 2012 meeting notes. This advisory committee meeting had reviewed historic community partner meetings and made recommendations about these meetings going forward. The purpose of today's dialogue was to check-in on the best practices for effective partner communication and working relationships given the change in the VRS organizational structure to a regional model. The committee discussed their ideas on ways to get out statewide messages and information in an effective and efficient manner.

**Statewide Meetings:** especially useful for updates on broad impact topics such as sequestration and strategic issues/goals.

**Regional and Local Meetings:** an illustrative recent example was cited that suggests the nature of these regional / local meetings may be changing. This was an event wherein VRS and partners in the Northern Region invited Metro guests Robert Reedy (RISE Inc.) & Thant Pearson (VRS North Minneapolis Office) to attend their meeting and help their new local partnership take root and grow based on lessons learned from the Minneapolis Placement Partnership experience.

Regional agendas have often been 'driven' by VRS at the state level. The local meetings that have been developing for the past two years are primarily conducted for operational and tactical issues that are primarily driven by partners.

### **Overall observations for communication and meeting effectiveness:**

- Sara Sundeen recommended that giving first consideration to determining a clear purpose of the meeting will help the organizers to figure out how many attendees, who can/should attend, etc.
  - Meetings for pure downloading information vs. working session
- Becky Bazzarre noted that many CRP Executive Directors/CEOs also get information from the Minnesota Organization for Habilitation and Rehabilitation (MOHR, formerly MACRO).
  - What needs to go to executive track?
  - How can we leverage MOHR for those needs and how do we meet the needs of the other organizations beyond the 22 organizations currently involved in MOHR?
- The growth of collaborative partnerships has been ramping up and providing more opportunities for staff to collaborate and share information. The Minnesota Rehabilitation Association (MRA) recently provided an overview of the local placement collaborations with a spokesperson from each sharing something about their partnership.
- There are a number of good opportunities for program professionals to come together and share best practices.
- Projects were also cited as a means for strengthening the collaboration and providing increased opportunities for CRP/LUV staff to meet and interact with VRS leaders
- Summer conferences were traditionally developed to meet CARF training needs, but also have been used for broader training purposes.

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- Concerns were expressed with the timing, consistency, and sequencing of messages that sometimes occur among all the various initiatives and across the different dimensions of state/regional/local e.g. Next Gen pilots announcements. The committee acknowledged that even with best of intentions, mishaps and mistakes are bound to happen from time to time. Revisiting and refreshing on expectations and communication check-ins are a few of the ways to stay aligned and in harmony.

The next area of conversation was around the value of the regional meetings versus the local meetings. Members noted that regional meetings may not need to be a full day in length and depending on content could be designed for a half day. From a logistics planning standpoint, members noted that it is better when meetings are located within a 2 hours drive. The Northern regional is tougher than Metro due to its extensive geographic range. The committee agreed that calling regional meetings as needed is most appropriate e.g. Next Gen pilot training. However, David Sherwood-Gabrielson reminded the committee that depending on location and number of attendees, meeting logistics often requires some degree of advance planning to secure space and organize the gathering.

The committee also discussed increased use of technology for information sharing e.g. WebEx/webinars. Benefits include reduced travel time and expenses, greater participation, and recording flexibility for future/repeat viewing.

### KEY MESSAGES FROM TODAY

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#### Important Messages for the Greater Vocational Rehabilitation Community:

- Our departed advisory committee member and friend Lori Sterner touched the lives of so many people. She inspires us all to think about own legacies.
- The CRP Advisory Committee has an important role and influence in building and strengthening the greater rehabilitation community. The 2013 charter refines our objectives to more explicitly outline this responsibility and opportunity. We are excited to build upon the first two years!
- The Supreme Court's Olmstead Decision renews Minnesota's vocational rehabilitation focus and energies in serving those with the most significant disabilities in pursuing their employment and community integration hopes and dreams. The Governor's Olmstead Sub-cabinet is formally charged with creating a plan for interagency strategies to improve our work and outcomes towards these ends.
- Minnesota's vocational rehabilitation community is strong and getting stronger every day. Our continued shared commitment to building a stronger network at every level - statewide, regionally and locally - is making a positive difference in the working relationships and outcomes we are experiencing as an entire system.
- Employers and Consumers alike benefit when we strengthen our partnership with each other and with all the other important stakeholders in our communities.
- Reflecting on what we are experiencing and adjustments that may be needed is a healthy process for any group. These discussions help us to stay clearly aligned and working towards our common purpose in service to the employment, independent living and community integration goals of Minnesotans with disabilities.